

8 September 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

1. Attached is a draft transmittal note for the cease-fire memo you were given at this morning's Executive Committee meeting. This note is being submitted in draft because it has three variant conclusions to its final sentence (take your choice). Also, you may want to tinker with the language, particularly of paragraph 2.

2. This is a tricky subject, but for the record (and our protection) the message of paragraph 2 needs to be put in writing over your signature. We do not (and will not) know what the North Vietnamese have been saying privately to Henry, or vice versa. Hence we are making an assessment in ignorance of a critical body of evidence known to our principal reader.

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[REDACTED]

If so, this could mean several things including (but not limited to) the following

(a) Henry has offered concessions to the North Vietnamese of which we are ignorant.

(b) The North Vietnamese have showed signs of weakness or flexibility or themselves offered concessions of which we are ignorant.

(c) The North Vietnamese have made statements which Henry thinks are indicative of weakness and/or flexibility, though whether or not Henry's interpretation of any such statements is correct would be another, separate question.

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3. The attached memo is a good, solid and helpful piece of work. (And pace [redacted] was the basic drafter, though several other cooks stirred and/or seasoned the broth.) Its conclusion -- the one to which the evidence available to us clearly points -- is that the North Vietnamese are not likely to go the cease-fire route in the near future unless the U.S. makes more concessions that (so far as we are aware) has made to date or (if we read the President correctly, which we may not) is likely to make.

4. In sum, the memo is a good piece of professional work which has been specifically asked for, is expected and, hence, which we can probably not (and shouldn't) avoid forwarding, at least to Henry. (My distribution vote would be WSAG principals plus Rogers and Laird, but that is your decision.) Given the situation, however, it inevitably puts us out on a limb which would get sawed off if in fact there should be some kind of a cease-fire before the end of the year. Therefore (to coin a phrase) I want the record to make it perfectly clear that the Agency had to write the memo without possession of all the facts known to its principal recipient. If the ball then bounces in a different direction from the one we predict, we will be able to argue honorably that had we known what Henry knew but chose not to tell us, we would have made a different assessment. This would at least help us cope with any effort he might make to mousetrap us.

George A. Carver, Jr.  
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment

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